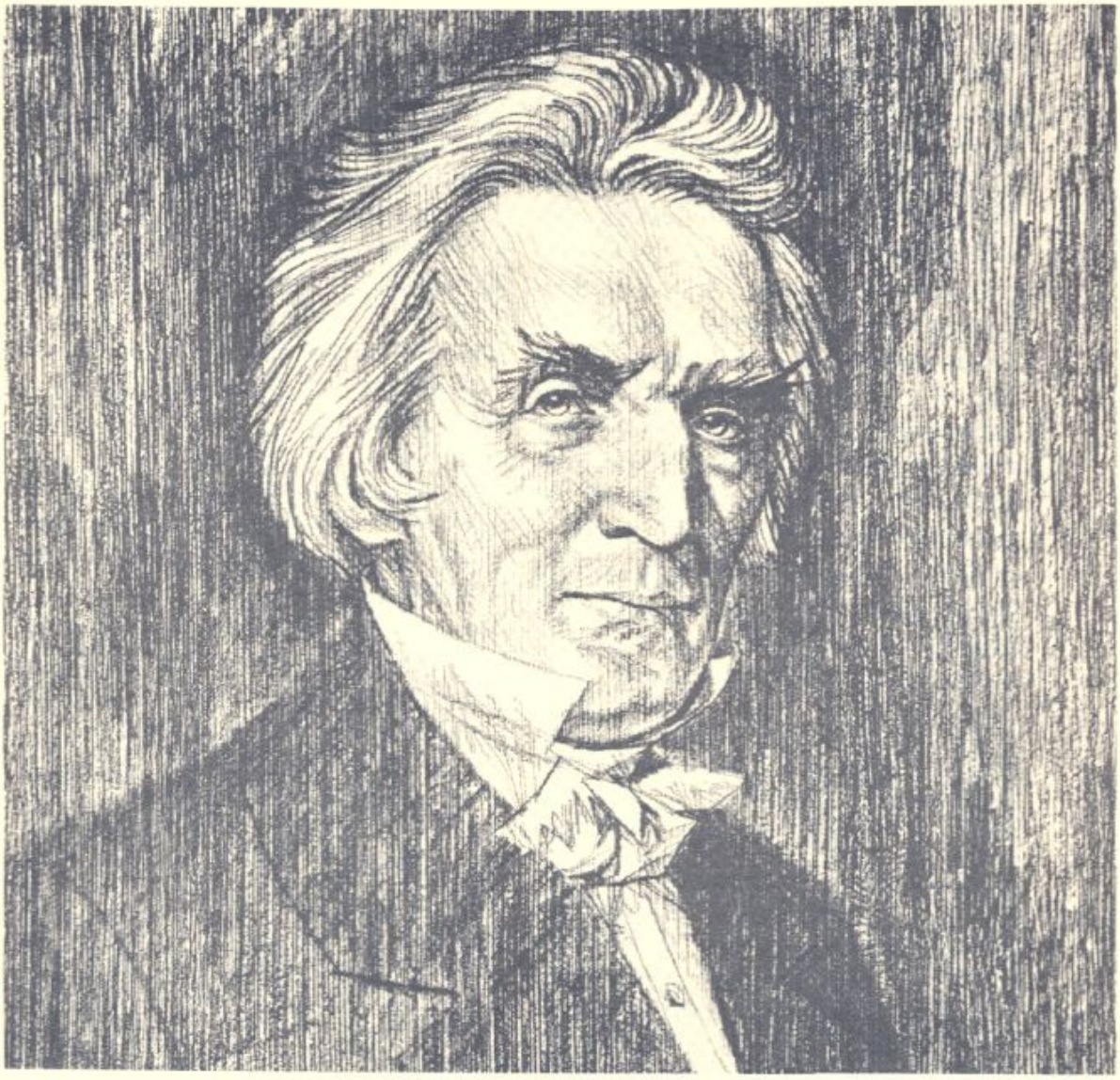
RESTORATION REVIEW



Alexander Campbell believed "the healing of the divisions among Christians" can be realized only by a restoration of pure speech, a return to "the vocabulary of heaven." This is a sadly neglected principle in modern ecumenism.

SEE THE RESTORATION OF A PURE SPEECH
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IF NOT BROTHERHOOD, THEN COEXISTENCE

Ralph Bunche, our deputy ambassador to the United Nations, made an observation about brotherhood recently that merits our study. In an interview in *Psychology Today,* the famed Negro commented: "We can save the world with a lot less than brotherhood. With coexistence! I used to make speeches about brotherhood, but I never mention it anymore. Brotherhood is a misused, misleading term. What we need in this world is not brotherhood but coexistence. We need the right of every person to his own dignity. We need mutual respect."

In speaking *against* brotherhood in this way, Mr. Bunche is revealing that he has a very high regard for its meaning. He implies that brotherhood is *more* than dignified treatment and mutual respect, for he is willing to settle for these values, which he equates with coexistence.

It is to suggest that brotherhood among men is too much to expect, at least for now, and that we would do well to settle for a more realistic goal.

As one views the tragic divisions among God's people, especially the Restoration brotherhood, he sees wisdom in Bunche's analysis. We ourselves are so far from real brotherhood that we too might do well to settle for coexistence, at least for the present. Since we are so slow in learning how to treat some of God's children *brotherly,* we might try first learning how to refrain from treating them *unbrotherly.* If I cannot love a man, perhaps I can at least avoid hating him. If I cannot help him, I can at least refrain from hurting him.

Most of us have been guilty of giving lip-service to brotherhood while treating sons of the Father more like aliens than brothers. We must get away from an institutional view of brotherhood and see men as brothers because they are sons of *our* heavenly Father. Let him be "a member of the family" rather than "belonging to the church." The boys' school that issues a picture with a lad carrying another and saying, "Father, he ain't heavy, he's my brother!" may get closer to the meaning of brotherhood than does our behavior in the Church of Christ. The splendor of brotherhood shines through to us when we view it in terms of the family. How do we receive and treat our brothers and sisters who are the children of our own parents?

I am not suspicious of them, but trust them. Even when they do things I do not like, I put the best interpretation possible on what they say and do. I extend to them the benefit of every doubt. I enjoy being with them. I rejoice over their good fortunes and am saddened by their losses. I am ready and eager to help when they are in trouble. I hope for them fulness of life and eternal peace with God, even when they annoy me with their

skepticism. When they err, I seek to protect them from loss or embarrassment. I would not think of abusing them or advertising their weaknesses. When we are together as a family, I am gratified, but we are all conscious of the absent brother or sister. “All of us are here” is a blessing we seldom give voice to as the years of our lives multiply. That the family circle of eight children remains unbroken by death is a recognized blessing. We sometime wonder who will be the first to go, a painful anticipation.

This description would be typical of so many families across the land, and this is brotherhood. Should it be less vital and precious in the family of God?

On the desk beside me is a journal from the “conservative” wing of our brotherhood. In it are no less than two extended articles about a brother who was of its persuasion, but who has now “departed from the faith.” As one reads these two writers, both of whom refer to the offending member as a brother, he can hardly get the impression that they love the man as they would a member of their own family. They are resentful of what he has said and done. They challenge him to debate and castigate him for refusing to accept. He is referred to negatively again and again, even with his name emblazoned in the title of the articles. One gets the impression that they are after him. They are after their brother.

God knows, and some of you know, that I too have been guilty of this. It pains me to thumb through some of my earlier writings and remind myself of how I “cleaned the plow” of men I should have been treating as brothers. For months I rode a fellow editor as “Brother Hit and Run” because he would attack me in his paper and give me no chance to reply. Another I teased because he was once a mere sign-painter and now a highly-paid minister. I nettled others as “whistling in the dark” and billed Guy N. Woods, whom I twice debated, as Guy-in-Woods. I even “wrote ‘em up” when they put me in jail! And through the years I wouldn’t let them forget what they had done!

I would not have responded to my brothers in the flesh in these ways, and I was wrong in showing bitterness and resentment. I should have responded with “the sweet reasonableness of Christ.” But those are among the sins of yesteryear. Now I long to treat every man as one for whom Christ died, and those who are Christ’s I desire to treat with special tenderness. God forgive me when I fail to do this!

We must learn to appreciate more deeply what it means to be brothers. The poet Edwin Markham says it in a single line: “The crest and crowning of all good, life’s final star, is Brotherhood.” Paul surely understood the meaning of brotherhood or he could never have written: “If food is a cause of my brother’s falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall” (1 Cor. 13:8). The apostle speaks tenderly of “the brother for whom Christ died.” Oh, if we could but see each other in this light!

If Paul could forego meat, something completely within his right, in order to relieve a brother’s conscience, we can surely refrain from that stare, avoidance, sarcasm, indifference, or a writeup that wounds a brother. It is sobering to realize that the way we

treat a brother is indeed the way we are treating Christ. This caused Paul to write: “Sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.”

It appears, however, that this kind of brotherliness has thus far eluded us or we have eluded it. So we might let the first step be coexistence, which would be, as defined by Ralph Bunche, a great improvement over our present behavior.

A visitor in a Texas city was asking the secretary at the largest Church of Christ about the other congregations in the area. When she named those that were on the approved list, the visitor inquired about two others, one premillennial and the other non-Sunday School. Her answer was “We are not in fellowship with those churches.”

A Texas church selected a Louisiana town in which to do mission work, for “the gospel has never been preached there,” wholly ignoring a premillennial congregation that had been there 50 years. Once on the scene the missionary from Texas acted as if the premill brethren did not exist.

It is common practice among us for churches in a city to erect a sign on the highway inviting people to visit “The Churches of Christ of ” Almost without exception there are other Churches of Christ that are not listed and who were not even consulted. It is as if they did not exist.

Our papers carry news items of Christian Church ministers who have been “converted to the truth”, or they have “accepted New Testament Christianity.” The editors in the Christian Church are kind enough not to do us that way when our men go to them, as they often have.

Brethren who move to a new location just happen sometime to identify themselves with a premill congregation and are happily situated, not noticing or not caring that they are premillennial. Such ones are soon called on by “loyal” brethren and warned of their evil association.

These illustrations, which are by no means atypical, show that we do not even coexist with those who are “brothers for whom Christ died.” If we cannot bless, we can at least not curse; if we cannot accept, we can at least not reject. A Hindu proverb reads: “Help thy brother’s boat across, and lo! thine own has reached the shore.” We have not yet learned to refrain from puncturing holes in our brother’s boat.

Coexistence may not allow for the likes of pulpit exchanges, cooperative efforts, or even mutual visitation. But it will mean an admission of existence, a kind of live and let live relationship. It may not be like sending a dove of peace, but it will be like calling off the dogs.

But brotherhood itself is the end in view. The call for a policy of coexistence as the stage setting for something still higher. Once we begin to coexist we will trail out toward real brotherhood. Respect and tolerance will give way to brotherly affection.

Thomas V. Smith expresses my sentiments:

"Brotherhood is in essence, a hope on the road the long road to fulfillment. To claim it to be already a full grown fact is to be guilty of hypocrisy. To admit it to be always a fiction is to be guilty of cynicism. Let us avoid both."

—the Editor

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A FUNNY THING HAS HAPPENED TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Maybe it isn't so funny after all. It may depend on whether you are *in* with the powers that be or *out.* But whether you are *in* or *out*, you are bound to be in for some laughs, provided you are willing to laugh at yourself or, more accurately, those of us who make up the Churches of Christ.

I am referring to *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Heaven*, a new book by Gary Freeman, soon to be issued by Harper and Row. The advance review copy that Ouida and I have already read in bed, out of bed, at breakfast, all over the house has me wondering how it is going to be received by our people. Usually I am a prophet regarding such things, but not this time. One might suppose that not a one of our outlets will touch it with a ten foot pole, but then again, for a major publishing house to give so much attention to the Church of Christ, it is going to be hard to ignore it.

It is a parody on a preacher's life in the Church of Christ, Gary Freeman being that preacher, more or less, we may suppose. Gary is a satirist, a diabolical satirist, and he is at his best "on the way to heaven." One does not get the impression that he is mad at anybody or even hurt. It is rather a "You wouldn't believe it, bur here's what happened" attitude. It is a matter-of-fact look at the Church of Christ from an insider, and Gary admits one has to be on the inside to understand what goes on.

He assures us in the preface that "There's not a word of truth in the following story. I don't just mean that the story is fiction, which is obvious enough. I mean it isn't based on anything. The religious attitudes portrayed herein are preposterous. They're completely unlike any I've ever seen. There are no churches like this one, no people like Dr. Thorndike and Allbright and Charles Francis Duncan, no schools like Sinai Christian College."

He further says: “The very idea that innocent people can get crushed in ecclesiastical machinery, or that there is any tension between idealism and institutionalism, is too fantastic to require refutation. Readers who think they see dim parallels somewhere should be locked up.”

I told you he is a diabolical satirist. Those words are only a taste of what you are in for. Before you finish the book you will not only admit that you should be locked up, but you’ll probably be willing for the key to be thrown away.

Some of us will see at least a “dim parallel” between our alma mater and Sinai Christian College, which Gary places in “a medium-sized town situated in the vast expanses of West Texas.” The college is located on a hill in the northwest part of town, and is referred to as “the Hill” by the brethren, but as “Mt. Olympus” by the Methodists and Baptists, who also have colleges in the town.

Equally identifiable is the editor of *The Militant Contender,* who leads a fight against the biology textbooks in the state schools because they are tainted with evolution, but who is so ignorant he doesn’t know the difference between a molecule and a molehill. Then there is the big-time evangelist who preaches against slang and conducts his own campaign against a widely-used hymnal because it is tainted with premillennialism. In Cletus Kinchelow’s congregation, presumably Gary’s prototype, the songbooks are disposed of by giving them to the Negro church.

Cletus’ church is called The True Church, which does not use instrumental music and believes it is the only true church and its members the only Christians. He has a round of experiences that move him gradually into the larger Christian world, especially when he goes to seminary, where he finds the professors eminently Christian rather than heretical liberals as he had been told.

He becomes disenchanted with the *status quo* of The True Church and its lack of interest in social ills. He describes its institutional politics as both real and merciless. A “liberal” preacher can be crushed by editors and big preachers. When Cletus shares his views with fellow ministers, he finds they have his misgivings about The True Church being right about everything, and they even weigh the question of whether it might not be seriously wrong in its attitudes and practices. But they agree that if there is the slightest hint to the powers that be about their doubts that they will be destroyed.

Cletus gets by all right with his doubts until he writes a play about politics in The True Church, which is naively selected by the drama instructor at Sinai Christian College. Once the play unfolds on the stage at “the Hill” Cletus is consigned to an asylum by the president of the college.

The play is ingenious and remarkably descriptive of the struggle of young, intelligent professors at Sinai Christian College to be both free and true to college and church. It is the drama of conflict between idealism and institutionalism.

The play is Gary Freeman at his best. It was performed at Cletus' college during its annual Bible lectureship, and it was devastating. But it is hardly conceivable that such a play could ever really be performed on "the Hill" out West Texas way.

In the play the college president gallantly sacrifices his own professor son to the ecclesiastical gallows for his liberal views, along with others, while a colleague comes to his defense, emotionally describing the crucible through which one goes in trying to remain an honest man amidst traditionalism.

The president speaks: "There can be no compromise in our position. We are the only church that has no other creed but the Bible. We speak where the Bible speaks, we are silent where the Bible is silent. Nadab and Abihu were struck down because they brought strange fire before the altar. God told Noah to build the ark out of gopher wood, not birch or maple or oak or teakwood."

So the heads fall, including the president's son. Butler, the president's assistant, was the one who "tightened the screw" by conducting a farce of an investigation. He was ably assisted by Baker, his girl secretary whom he addressed by her last name.

The play closes with Baker and Butler talking. The gore had been spilled and the bloody mess was over. Butler is asking his secretary how the final session went (the trial), for he couldn't bear to be present.

> *Baker:* Oh, according to the usual form, sir. Young Thorndike (the president's son), Miller, and Crawford were dismissed from the school, without severance pay, of course. Then they were read out of the church. Their candlesticks were taken up one by one by President Thorndike and smashed to kingdom come.
>
> *Butler:* Thorndike was right, of course. The code must be honored above all things. There's no doubt the three young men were guilty as charged. They should have remembered that we're the only church which takes the Bible only as its creed. We speak where the Bible speaks, and we're silent where the Bible is silent.
>
> *Baker:* The case of Nadab and Abihu shows that we're not to bring strange fire before the altar sir. Which is why we don't use instrumental music.
>
> *Butler:* For that matter, Baker, consider the case of Noah. He was told to make the ark out of gopher wood. Not a word about birch or maple or oak.
>
> *Baker*: (tidying up the room or desk) : Or teakwood, sir?
>
> *Butler*: (drinking his coffee and be ginning to read) : Or teakwood.

I must admit that I laughed until the tears came at those last lines, and yet the play, though a parody, speaks volumes as to the lengths to which we have gone to preserve our party.

A few quotes from here and there in the book will whet your curiosity for more.

"The brethren tend to get a little panicky on the subject of doctrinal soundness. If it had been a question of ethics, no one would have missed a beat."

"The funny thing about it is that the college doesn't even teach one philosophy course."

"We must get over the disease of believing that we're the one true church."

"We have an unwritten creed just as definitive as any church ever put down on paper."

(The last two statements were ones that got the college professors fired.)

"Is it possible that we've been wrong all the time? Not just wrong about what we say. But wrong in a more serious way? Wrong about what we imply, wrong about what we don't say and don't stand for, wrong deep in our hearts?"

"I finished out the year (of seminary) and considered quitting. I was afraid to go on. I was afraid I would discover that he and the Others were right. And I knew very well that if I ever came to believe they were right, I was finished."

"The way we figured it, not using instrumental music was about the greatest coup any church ever pulled off. In the back of our minds we could see St. Peter at the pearly gates, letting the lucky ones through and sending the evil ones to their just roasting and saying, "He didn't use it, he used it . . ." etc.

"We've focused so long on the sins of other churches that we've become the most incredible incongruity of all: a church without pity."

You'll laugh and weep with Cletus as he struggles his funny way to heaven. There's the brother who confessed to him that he had committed adultery with 500 women. There's his diatribe against the seminary professor for disturbing the easy answers he had learned at Sinai. There's the psychologist who examines him once he's confined to the asylum. You'll scream! Are you sold or shall I go on?

Well, the college president and the editor of *The Militant Contender* finally visit with Cletus at the asylum and tell him how to get along in the brotherhood. It is quite a conversation. Many a Cletus have heard the story on how to get along. Cletus was to write an article for *The Militant Contender* to show the brethren how sound he was! But Cletus refuses, at least for the moment, for he does not want to "bend and scrape and fawn."

At this point Cletus accuses the brethren of not *really* believing in Jesus, not the *real* Jesus. "They may romanticize his memory it helps control the natives but they think the real Jesus belongs in a cage somewhere with a keeper to feed him peanuts."

But the editor and college president tell Cletus of a big church in Dallas that has a vacant pulpit. At last He capitulates, more or less. The book closes with him at Fourth and Izzard True Church in Dallas. He wrote the article, but did not sell out. He is older and wiser now. He likes being on the lectureships and being invited out to dinner and being treated as sane. They compliment his sermons. He has learned to be discreet.

He decides that the important thing is to save the organism, even if men must be sacrificed, along with their wives and children.

But one must never ask the question, "For what?"

But with all of that *you* have but a tithing of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Heaven.* It is almost the only instance of a major publishing house issuing anything from one of us. This alone makes it significant. We conclude that Harper and Row is publishing the book because they believe it says something important *to* and *about* religion in America.

If *you* are in the Church of Christ and do not read this book, you ought to be locked up. If we can read it and laugh at ourselves, it will indicate that we are growing. Those I'm concerned about are those who will refuse to read it, or if they do, they'll see nothing funny about it in the least.

We do not know about other Church of Christ outlets, but we're ordering a big box of the books. *You* can have a copy for 3.95, the going price. If you order at once, we will put your order in the mail on the day of publication, May 21. They are not to be sold before that date.

In the meantime, let's all stand by to see what happens to this book. Gary wrote me that *Restoration Review* was the only brotherhood medium that said anything about his last book, *Are You Going to Church More But Enjoying It Less?"*

What will happen this time? I don't know. But I do know that a funny thing has happened to the Church of Christ on its way to heaven.—*the Editor*

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IS THERE HOPE FOR THE CHURCH OF CHRIST COLLEGE?

There is much discussion these days as to whether the small liberal-arts, church-related college can survive. The question is based on economic realities, and some insist that such colleges will not make it unless industry and government come forth with substantial outlay of funds.

While this problem concerns our own Christian colleges, this is not the point of the question we are asking. Even if they do survive *financially,* and the chances for this is good, there is the question as to whether they will ever become truly *liberal* institutions of higher learning. A Christian college is first of all to be a *college,* which means it is to be a community of scholars in the quest for truth. It must be free and liberal, open to new ideas and ready for change. It must be on the growing edge, teaching its students to think and to criticize. Its faculty must be under no pressure to preserve the *status quo,* to indulge in obscurantism; it must be free to pursue the search for reality wherever it may lead. There

can be no “keep off the grass” signs around. If academic freedom means anything, it means that one is at liberty to examine honestly and forthrightly all sides of every important issue.

Is there hope for the Church of Christ college from this standpoint? The question was brought to mind anew by a recent letter from a former professor of Harding College. Here is part of it.

> I am enclosing a clipping from the *Arkansas Gazette* in Little Rock that was sent to me. You have probably already heard about the most recent trouble at Harding College. If not, this will fill you in. When I heard the news (first through telephone conversations with friends there), I was furious, but I was never surprised. I tried desperately all last year to convince Jim Atteberry that Harding is a thoroughly corrupt place, but he never could see it.
>
> I think the affair at Abilene last year with regard to Jim Culp and Robert Johnston (?) and Harding this year indicates once again that there is really no hope for the Church of Christ colleges. The situation would not disturb me so much if I didn’t know what these continual blowups do to the people who are involved. I think Eric Hoffer very clearly describes the situation in his section on “the fanatics” in *The True Believers.*

I would remind the reader that this evaluation comes from one who was for several years on the faculty at one of these colleges, and those to whom he refers, who now share his disillusionment, have been faculty members for as long as 16 years. Such ones are being fired for not following the party line.

Notice this report from the *Arkansas Gazette.*

> About 100 Harding College students met in a rainstorm Wednesday night to protest the school’s request for the resignation of Dr. James Atteberry, chairman of the school’s English Department.
>
> The popular professor, who received a “Distinguished Teacher” award last year, reportedly was facing dismissal for his liberal bent at this Church of Christ college. The school is regarded generally as a seat of conservatism.
>
> George S. Benson, its founder and president for many years, heads the ultraconservative National Education Program, which has disassociated itself with the school, where it was founded.
>
> The student rally pointed up troubles that are brewing at the school.
>
> The students gathered outside the administration building under a roof of umbrellas for what had been announced variously as a “demonstration” and “a devotional to help alleviate campus tensions.”
>
> They said they were concerned that the loss of Atteberry, who has been with the school for 16 years, was going to cause mass resignations on the faculty.

> Atteberry said Thursday, "I was given the choice of resigning or being dismissed and I have not decided which I will take. I think I will probably resign, stating the reasons."
>
> He said he was summoned before the Board of Trustees Monday and, "I endorsed all the Biblical principles of the New Testament, but refused to take a position on the views of some of the members of the Board involving matters of opinion. There was a feeling that I am somewhat liberal and am appreciated by young teachers."

The writeup goes on to tell of two other faculty people who have resigned and still two others who have been fired. It was reported among the students that as many as 20-25 professors would resign.

When one realizes that the charges against such men are not immorality, for their lives are exemplary; or atheism, for they are devoted Christians; or insurrection, for they have long loved both the college and the country. The long and short of it is that they are not saying things the way the Church of Christ hierarchy wants them said. When those on the college faculties are themselves referring to the colleges as "thoroughly corrupt" and see no hope for improvement, it is high time that the rest of us open our eyes to what is going on.

It is especially remarkable that those who are fired or leave in disgust are among the very best minds on the faculty. Dr. Atteberry was honored as "Distinguished Teacher" and was "appreciated by the young teachers." After 16 years of this kind of service he is fired!

As a chapter president of the American Association of University Professors, I have had some experience with colleges that get themselves into trouble with said organization when they treat professors in such a way. But nobody bothers to report our schools to the AAUP for such behavior, partly because, I suppose, they do not rate high enough academically to merit such concern. Professional people simply do not take our schools very seriously. Nothing helps one more in the academic world than to get oneself fired by one of them!

I know it to be a fact that one college took a dim view of even considering one of our English Ph.D.'s for its staff since his record included five years on the faculty of Harding College. When it was pointed out to the administration that the man was *fired* at Harding, they were more than glad to invite him to join their faculty. What a reputation for a college to have among the top educators of the nation!

So, the question is a live one: *Is there hope for the Church of Christ college?*

I say *yes.* I have hope. But my hope is not in what I see in the colleges themselves, but in a changing brotherhood. Riots in colleges across the land are due in part to the fact that they have been about two generations behind the times. Instead of initiating cultural change, whether it be in racial relations or economic reform, they have followed the lead

of others. The American university, due to its habit of irrelevance, found itself unprepared for the mid-20th century. The chickens have come home to roost in all these demonstrations.

And our own Christian colleges have been even more irrelevant and behind the times. Our schools were the very last to integrate, and even now it is hardly more than token integration. They are miles and miles behind academically. In areas like sociology and philosophy they are like the measure of oil in my car once was. The man added a quart and then said, "It is now up to low!" The little progress our colleges make brings them only up to a high low.

But I still say *yes* there is hope. Change will come from the congregations into the colleges. The brethren will gradually begin to demand it. It is likewise with freedom, brotherhood, fellowship, and unity. We will win the battle for these values, but any help from the colleges will be *nil*. The congregations will win the struggle for freedom for themselves, led by the present generation of young preachers and elders. The colleges will follow afar off. When the smoke of battle has cleared, the colleges will be there, truly free and liberal, with every right to be called real colleges.—*the Editor.*

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Alexander Campbell's "Synopsis of Reform" . . .

THE RESTORATION OF A PURE SPEECH

The restoration of a pure speech, or the calling of Bible things by Bible names.

In these words Alexander Campbell made his first point in presenting what he called "Synopsis of Reformation Principles and Objects." It was the first of five principles "for the healing of divisions among Christians and the better understanding of the Christian institution."

He insisted again and again in his writings that nothing is more essential to the unity of God's people than purity of speech. So long as the earth was of one speech the human family was united, he observed, and if they had been of a *pure* speech, as well as one speech, they would not have been separated. In dispersing them to the ends of the earth, God first divided their language.

Campbell was impressed with the force of Zeph 3:9: "Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that hey may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent." He took this to mean that purity of speech is a prerequisite to serving the Lord in oneness.

He was disturbed by the unscriptural language "coined in the mint of speculative theology," contending that the fiercest disputes about religion are about what the Bible does *not* say rather than about what it *does* say. He could not see that anyone's name would be omitted from the Book of Life for his failure to understand or respond to the canons and creeds of theological opinion. They make men no better, but they do contribute to religious division and confusion.

He thus calls for an adoption of "the vocabulary of Heaven" and a returning of the borrowed nomenclature of the schools to their rightful owners. We must distinguish between the testimony of God and man's reasonings and philosophy upon it. The Bible that speaks of there being "One Lord, one faith, one immersion, one God and Father of all," says nothing about there being *one opinion.* While he finds a place for opinion in Christian experience, opinion must never be made a test of communion.

In this connection he makes an important observation. If unity of opinion were desirable, he points out, it could be attained only by allowing the greatest liberty of opinion. The more people *insist* upon everyone believing alike the less agreement there will be. The more *demand* there is for conformity the more division there will be. So, even if it be conformity that we desire, the best way of achieving it is to allow freedom of opinion. It is in an atmosphere of openness that people are more likely to come to see things alike.

We disciples of the 1960's have not measured up to the wisdom of Campbell's psychology of over a century ago. We strive to bring each other into subjection, conforming the dissidents to our own party's interpretation by debating them, withdrawing from them, calling them names, writing them up, and otherwise browbeating them. This has only created more parties. The character of the human mind is such, Campbell realized, that it can be nurtured to believe in a given way only by being left free. Coercion may create a totalitarian community, but never unity of opinion.

Campbell also observed that in most cases of exclusion it is the most desirable and the most intelligent that are rejected as heretics. While heresy is always the charge, it is often a case of one knowing more about the Bible than his accusers. He says, "In most instances the greatest error of which a brother can be guilty, is to study the Bible more than his companions or, at least, to surpass them in his knowledge of the mystery of Christ."

This tragic fact has changed little since Campbell's time. The heresy hunt now going on at our Christian colleges bears witness to this, along with the increasing instances of dismissal of some of the best minds on the faculties. It is still a dangerous thing among us to have a vision of excellence, to rise above mediocrity, and to attain intellectual grace.

But to return to Campbell's plea for purity of speech, reference should be made to his list of *impurities* of religious vocabulary. Some on the list are: the Holy Trinity, original sin, total depravity, effectual calling, free grace, imputed righteousness, justifying and saving faith, historic and temporary faith, visible and invisible church, sacraments.

We do not hear much of most of these, but Campbell saw them as impediments to an understanding of the Bible in his own time. Today we should compose our own list of impurities or "the vocabulary of Ashdod" as they might be called. We may be tempted to pick on the "sectarians" in making out our list, but if we are honest in the matter we will find that any list we prepare on others applies embarrassingly to ourselves as well. And since this is a study in the thought of our Movement it is proper that we give attention to what has happened to us in reference to vocabulary. To what degree are we ourselves in need of a restoration of pure speech?

We shall confine ourselves to some of the language we use in reference to *the church.*

The Term "Church"

And this term itself may have such impurities as to blind our vision of many vital truths. It now has an *institutional* connotation. We hardly see the church as a *community* or *family. ''*The congregation (church) in thy house," a phrase that occurs at least three times in the scriptures, suggests a simplicity that is almost totally absent in our institutional concept of the church. In "the underground church" there are signs of renewal of the house church.

Most of us are aware that *church* is not a translation of the Greek "ekklesia" at all, but a bastard term introduced by the Anglican fathers who gave us the King James Version, mainly for the purpose of appeasing the ecclesiastical prejudices of their king. Few translators since that time have had the courage to dispense with a term that has become so embedded in religious culture. But the Jewish translator Hugh Schonfield is one. Throughout his *The Authentic New Testament* he renders "ekklesia" as *community.* He renders Mt. 16:18 as "So I tell you, since you are Peter, upon that rock I will found my Community, and the gates of hell shall nor prevail against it." The Corinthian letters begin with: "To the community of God at Corinth," while Rom. 16:16 reads: "All the Christian communities send their regards." Such a rendition would really work havoc with our signs, wouldn't it?

Alexander Campbell was himself aware of the inappropriateness of the term *church,* and he omitted it from his *Living Oracles,* a translation based on the labors of the eminent George Campbell, James MacKnight, and Philip Doddridge. Throughout the New Covenant scriptures they used the term *congregation.* Acts 20:28 thus reads: "Therefore, take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock over which the Holy Spirit has constituted

you overseers; to feed the congregation of the Lord, which he has redeemed with his own blood."

We have ample grounds, therefore, for restoring such terms as *community* and *congregation* to our vocabulary, while relegating the term *church* to the ecclesiastical dumping ground where it belongs.

Doing so would enhance our concept of brotherhood. We are inclined to treat "a member of the church,"which is not a scriptural concept, with a coolness not usually characteristic of the relationship between brothers and sisters. It is easier to "withdraw fellowship," another unscriptural term, from a member of the church than from a brother in the family.

The Anglican fathers used *church*, taken from an old English-German term, because it was already in their time an institutional concept, and the concept has become solidified through the centuries. When people think of *the Church* they almost certainly have ideas not intended by the Christ when he spoke of building his community. The ensuing centuries have brought us all sorts of ecclesiastical structures, organizations, doctrines, and vested interests. All of these seem inappropriate in view of terms like community, family, congregation.

We are thus deluged with loads of Ashdod. We have church edifices, church music, church architecture, church property, along with "going to church," and "church membership." There is even the fabled church mouse. Then comes the church staff, with its minister, associate minister, minister of music, and secretary, to name a few. All this makes for bigness. "The congregation in thy house" is thus something of a freak in our time. Even the small congregation hardly rates these days.

Bigness, which goes with churchmanship, is a Pandora's box. It creates an atmosphere that actually makes the devotional disciplines difficult. The children in the family hardly know each other. Some are members of the same congregation for years without ever knowing it. It encourages an impersonal religion, for only a few know what is going on, indicated by the use of "they" in describing what may or may not happen. Bigness not only encourages clericalism and clerical control, but it makes a mutual ministry virtually impossible. Its chief concerns are its edifice, budget, staff, educated clergy, denominational projects, attendance. Spontaneity is a gift of freedom, a gift hardly known in the big, institutional church. It would be inappropriate for a brother "who has a word of exhortation" or "who has a hymn" to express himself in our congregations today. He would be infringing upon clerical prerogatives. The sacred desk is reserved for him whose right it is by contract, who would himself be infringing upon a fellow professional, once he goes elsewhere, should he have the urge to speak once more in the pulpit now claimed by another.

All this and more is associated with *Church,* and we are now inclined to capitalize the *c.* It is *the establishment.* It once had the power of life and death over men. Even now it has power over their livelihood, and it can crush any man who looks to it for sustenance. It still holds the threat of hell over men's souls. But among its greatest evils is its immorality, for it is the proudest and most selfish of all institutions. It controls great riches and property, with no taxes to pay, and does less for the poor than state welfare agencies.

It is appropriate to add that if we succeed in recovering such terms as *community, assembly,* and *congregation* we will have to sacrifice a term that has become all too precious, our exclusive name THE CHURCH OF CHRIST. And if we succeed in recovering the spirit and beauty of *the family of God* to our congregational life, we will be the better off for it. To be sure, the institutional church must go.

Other Impurities

There are other terms related to the life of God's community that are deterrents to clarity. We shall mention some of these only briefly.

Communion. The same Greek term that is rendered *communion* is also translated as fellowship, distribution and communication. *Communion* is therefore many things, related as it is to the whole life of the family. There is no such things as "the Communion" in the scriptures, and to refer to the Lord's Supper in this way is improper. It is of course *a* communion, but not *the* communion.

Ministry. We are as bad as the next denomination in speaking of "entering the ministry" and in distinguishing between ministers and other saints. Our ministers are those who "preach" from behind the sacred desk. But the scriptural view of ministry is that of *service.* The same word from which we get *minister* we get also *deacon,* both terms referring to those who serve. Letterheads listing Minister, Elders, Deacons (and practices that conform to this) therefore miss the mark. One enters the service or ministry of Christ when he enters Christ.

Sanctuary. We are not guilty here as some, but even among us there is talk of a room in a building as "the sanctuary." It would be more scriptural to refer to those who sing and pray in that room as *sanctuaries,* for it is in them that God makes his abode, not in any room or building. It is the believer that is a sanctuary of God, for in him God's spirit dwells. We should not hesitate to think of ourselves as *saints,* which is to say that God is in us as his holy vessels. In Christianity it is only the human heart that is holy. There are no other sanctuaries. There are no holy days, places or things.

Fellowship. This terms is terribly abused, qualifying as it does for anyone's list of impure speech. Fellowship is a relationship people enter into by virtue of being in Christ together. It is a sharing of the common life. It is a partnership in Christ, shared by all believers. Fellowship is not related to things like organs, missionary societies and Sunday

School literature. To talk of "fellowshiping instrumental music" is thus confusing. Even to speak of "fellowshiping the Christian Church" also misses the point, for fellowship is between *fellows,* believers, and not with institutions. To use the term as a verb, as if it were some *act* of ours, is foreign to the scriptures. One may as well talk about "sonshiping" with a brother or "companionshiping" with his wife. The *ship* in the word points to a state or relationship shared together. Brothers in a family share sonship by reason of having the same father. Couples share companionship because of the bond of marriage. Christians are in the fellowship because they are in Christ together. It is therefore unscriptural to talk of "fellowshiping" anything. God calls us into his fellowship by the gospel. We have no control over the relationship, no more than a man can control who shares "sonship" with him. If his Mother presents him with a new brother, there isn't much he can do about it. It thus follows that every child of God is our brother, and he is in the fellowship because of that. Part of the problem is that we confuse fellowship with *approval.* While one may *disapprove* of missionary societies, he is nonetheless in the fellowship with those brethren who adhere to that method of preaching the gospel.

Gospel. So common a term as the gospel also makes our list of impure language, for there is good evidence for concluding that as a people we do not know what the gospel is. We suppose that if a church has a piano it is "perverting the gospel," or that one does not minister the gospel if he is wrong on some points of doctrine. We fail to see that the gospel was preached in its fulness and was gloriously obeyed long before most of the New Testament scriptures were written. We must therefore distinguish between the gospel of Christ, which brings men to Christ, and the apostles' doctrine, which schools them in Christian discipline.

It is noteworthy that Campbell introduced this principle of pure speech "for the healing of divisions among Christians and the better understanding of the Christian institution." Surely understanding and the healing of divisions are so related. A return to pure speech will mean a better understanding of Christianity. The recovery of proper vocabulary will help us in the renewal of fellowship and brotherhood.—*the Editor.*

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KEEPING THE FLOCK PURE

DON JOHNSON

I learned recently that a preaching friend had been disfellowshipped by his congregation because of some ideas he had developed regarding the Lord's Supper. I do not know what "new" beliefs he had formed to render himself unacceptable, but I can state with virtual certainty that his excommunication was unscriptural.

We in the Church of Christ place great importance in having specific scriptural authority for anything which pertains to our relationship with God. Such authority, though, is a requisite only in reference to our formal worship of our Creator. The "weightier matters" of justice and mercy, which should be of primary concern to us daily, take second place to being correct on Sunday morning. Our concern is misdirected, because the Bible emphasizes living a righteous and exemplary life much more than it stresses baptism, the Lord's Supper, or the absence of a fiddle in the sanctuary.

The only definite scriptural reason for disfellowshiping a brother is the lack of such exemplary conduct; one can be scripturally disfellowshipped only for such grossness of conduct that it is noticed by those outside the kingdom. "I actually hear reports of sexual immorality among you, immorality such as even pagans do not tolerate; the union of a man with his father's wife." (1 Cor. 5:1, NEB)

One doubts that we would have had the patience with the Corinthian Christians that Paul had. The group was divided into sects that might well have called themselves, respectively, the Church of Paul, the Church of Apollos, the Church of Cephas, and the Church of Christ (I Cor. 1:12). The members went before the law courts to settle their family disputes. They had difficulty in casting aside their former idol worship. Although the Spirit of God worked in them in different ways, they coveted the most sensational gift: tongues. No, the Christians at Corinth were not a model body.

Paul was certainly disappointed by such troubles, but he urged the church to rid itself of only one man: the man having an adulterous relationship with his father's wife. That man was clearly lowering the esteem in which the way was held in the Corinthian community; it was thus imperative that he be cast out, both to save his own soul and the reputation of the congregation.

Paul mentioned in chapter 5 several other sins which would taint the *ecclesia* if the sinner were not disfellowshipped. Perhaps our modern churches have few members who are living adulterous lives or who are idolaters, but we likely can think of several covetous people who are leading lights in their respective congregations. And we certainly know a host of railers commonly known as back-biters who specialize in slashing their fellow Christians. Yes, we know them, but we tolerate them. (Particularly the covetous man, who may well be a big giver.)

We tend not to be as tolerant of those who differ from our traditional opinions. The independent thinker is welcomed in a few Churches of Christ, tolerated in somewhat more, and regarded as suspect and ultimately cast out of most of the remainder. The jury's reasoning in the purge usually follows this sequence: (1) we have already discovered all truth, (2) subject is proclaiming ideas which do not echo what we have always heard, (3) therefore, subject is proclaiming error, thus (4) subject must be ejected lest he lead the flock astray. The we-have-the-keys premise is untenable, and the dogmatism and rigid

enforcement of conformity arising from it stifle the spirit of freedom which Christ died to bring.

The apostle John, in his first letter, did command the Christians to avoid those who brought false doctrine, but his definition of false doctrine was very limited. The "trial of the spirits" concerned only the very essentials: those who acknowledged that Christ had indeed come in the flesh were spirits from God. The traditionalist may retort—indeed, I've heard him do so—that John's first epistle was written in a particular time to counteract the specific error of Gnosticism, which denied that Christ had come in the flesh. True, but what was sufficient for the apostles should be sufficient for us.

John himself had trouble with some of his peers: Diotrephes avoided him, tried to turn other Christians against him, and even tried to disfellowship some of John's friends. John might have been in similar trouble had he tried to worship with us, because he talked about love too much. The apostle Paul was a mite soft on the baptism question in Romans. He emphasized God's grace more than getting the steps in the right order and hence collecting a big check at the judgment. He fraternized with the Gentiles (who were much lower to most Jews than Negroes to some American whites) and even had the gall to rebuke a big preacher—Peter—for letting Establishment pressures influence his personal relations with non-Jews.

If Paul were to address modern Church of Christism with views as controversial as those he expressed before the Pharisees of his day, we might feel compelled to withdraw from him. For the flock to remain pure from taint, it must remain free from thought.

Don Johnson is presently working on his master's degree at the University of Texas.

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FOURTH ANNUAL UNITY FORUM

The Fourth Annual Unity Forum is to be conducted at the West Islip Church of Christ, 600 Montauk Hwy., Long Island, N. Y., July 35. The previous forums were held at Bethany College, Milligan College, and Southeastern Christian College, Winchester, Ky.

The purpose of the forums is to provide opportunity for contact and dialogue between the various groups of the Restoration Movement in hopes of creating a deeper sense of unity and brotherhood.

This year's session will bring together leaders of Disciples of Christ, Independent Christian Church, and Churches of Christ.

The program calls for discussions of such topics as the problem of legalism in the Restoration Movement, the possibility of faith in a secular society, the authority of the Scriptures, and the problem of black and white churches in the brotherhood. Leaders of each group are also expected to discuss what each segment of our Movement can do to create greater fellowship among ourselves and to encourage ecumenism in general.

The standing committee for the annual forum consists of Dr. Perry Gresham, Bethany College; Dr. Charles Gresham, Milligan College; LaVern Houtz, president, Southeastern Christian College; Dr. Thomas Langford, Texas Tech University; and Leroy Garrett, Bishop College, Dallas, Tex.

Dwain Evans, minister to the West Islip congregation, is coordinator for this year's program. Those seeking the complete program and information on housing should contact him at the address above.

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READERS' EXCHANGE

Procrustean Preachers

The clarity of your thinking is very refreshing. Also appreciate the other writers you share with us. Orthodoxy dies slowly, equating antiquity with authenticity. But Procrustean preachers have had their day. Keep up the good work.—*Kansas City*

Now there is a reference for you—*Procrustean preachers.* In Greek mythology Procrustes was the robber who tied his victims to a bed; if they were shorter than the bed, he stretched their limbs; if longer, he cut them down. So his name means *stretcher.* It could be that the clergy has been Procrustean, conforming folk to its *status quo.* Another Greek hero, Theseus, slew Procrustes and freed men from his evil designs. So, if we can have more Theseusean preachers, we can dispose of the orthodox beds by which brethren are measured and allow men to be free in Christ.

Trying to Stay

Again we thank you and ask God's blessings on your efforts to help up think and to be more understanding of each other. Your publication is eagerly read as soon as we receive it! It is so comforting to realize there are others who understand and care. We are trying so hard to stay. —*California*

By “trying so hard to stay” the writer means that they do not want to leave the Church of Christ, but to remain and to help us become a freer and more responsible people. This is constructive religion. Some of course *have* to leave, conditions being as they sometimes are. But those who can stay and work for renewal from within will in the years ahead have unique opportunities for good, for we are changing—mainly because some of our most responsible people, who are tempted to leave, are not leaving. Lest we forget that we are salt, and salt is not to be isolated from what it hopes to influence.

Commendation

I continue to enjoy your work. The articles are stimulating and sometimes startling, but always helpful.—*Illinois*

Keep up your good work. It is refreshing and inspiring to me to have your publication provide the penetrating insight we need to many vital problems of living the Christian life in the present age.—*Nebraska*

We have just enjoyed our first copy of *Restoration Review,* the March issue. If it is any consolation to the boy “way out in left field,” he has just acquired two new fans!—*New Mexico*

I thought this last statement so delightful that I took it to Ouida in the kitchen and read it to her. We got quite a bang out of it. The readers will recall in the last issue that a fellow editor had put me way out in left field, a relegation I gladly accepted in that it had me both on the field and in the game. And now we see that playing out there is not so bad, with two new fans applauding from the sidelines.

Being an editor, especially a controversial one, may have its difficulties, but a rewarding part of it is the people we come to know and love, having never seen, all over the country and the world. I especially appreciate the sense of humor so often evident. I’ll always remember the brother who wrote that, after discovering *Restoration Review* late one night, he awoke his wife to tell her about it! And there’s the sister who asked that two copies be sent to her address, for she and her husband fought over the one copy as to who would read it first!

The many dear friends we have made through the mail we may never get to meet on this earth, a fact I dislike, but I am old-fashioned enough to believe that the joy of acquaintance will be ours in a fairer land.

Campbell Slogan

You left Campbell’s slogan a little open-ended, after all, the failure to recognize that it *is* open-ended—a principle to be interpreted, not a formula to be mathematically applied—has caused many of our difficulties. A better atmosphere is prevailing; we are learning that

free investigation and personal interpretation, among committed Christians at least, does not mean anarchy.—*Alabama*

Pigeonholes

I am sorry that the brethren are having difficulty finding the right pigeonhole for you. I am thankful they in the last few years God has given me wisdom to see that pigeonholes are for pigeons, and that we ought to quit trying to stuff our brethren into them. When we label a man, we so often libel him, don't we? Continue urging us to proclaim the Word rather than our traditions.—*Missouri*

Lord's Supper

I got a copy shortly before the recent ACC Lectureship and took it with me. I read about half of it on the flight up and thought it was great. I had looked forward to finishing it after the lectures. Somehow it got away from me. Enclosed is a 1.00 for another copy.—*Texas*

I am young and am in college and I am aware that I need to learn. Thanks to men like yourself and Warren Lewis, for many of my questions are being answered. I believe *The Lord's Supper* will be worth a lot to us, for it will help many of us to give up our pride.—*Louisiana*

Why in the world was the book banned?—*Florida*

I suppose Dick Smith got it right when he said that Lewis' *The Lord's Supper* was rejected because it asked us to *think* rather than to accept what has always been said. If men get themselves fired, imprisoned and even killed for thinking instead of conforming, we need not be surprised when a book gets into trouble for making such a demand.

As we go to press for this issue we still have copies of the book at 1.00 each.—*Ed.*

More on Holy Spirit Retreat

Your view of the Dallas retreat was largely from a standpoint of human wisdom. You have the spirit of the Greeks who looked only for wisdom. They also would have expected the interpretation of a tongue to be "weighty and relevant."

You were looking at some of the activities, especially the exorcism, from a natural, or unspiritual, standpoint. I am not in the least surprised that you were disturbed about it. Nothing that happened has any place in unspiritual thought. This is particularly true of (the man who left). He probably had more demons than anyone else in the room and that is why he left. He was unwilling to let go of them. There would be no reason for driving them out against his will, because he would only accept them right back.

On the other hand there were many things that you saw with spiritual eyes—the heartfelt praise of God. the love between people who had hardly met before, etc. Your warning against the three dangers was especially good and very much appreciated by everyone I have talked to about the article.—Tennessee

This is only part of a long letter, which I will answer personally, from a young man brought up in the Church of Christ, son of an elder of a congregation in Nashville. He says, "I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in August of 1967 after a summer of extreme discouragement and depression." He writes a sweet, Christian letter ("I love you, Leroy, and pray that the Lord will richly bless your ministry in the *Review*"), all of which I appreciate.

I pass these paragraphs along to the readers so that they might realize that such ideas have made their way deep into the life of our people. I could quote from letters telling of "Spirit meetings" from various parts of the country, gatherings in which the baptism of the Spirit is sought and received. In some cases I am asked not to quote from such letters.

I am not here making any value judgments. I would only remind the young brother in Tennessee that our Lord drove out demons when neither the demons nor the one who possessed them was cooperative.—*Ed.*

The Quest of God, the bound volume of this journal for 1968, will be ready in June. Reserve your copy now, please, though you need send no money. You will be billed. This is a 200-page book on important religious themes, with its own introduction, table of contents, and colorful dust jacket illustrating God's quest of man.

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